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## A Home Safety Program for Low-Income Community-Dwelling Older Adults: Using Meals on Wheels Volunteers

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**Title of the Doctoral Presentation:** A Home Safety Program for Low-Income Community-Dwelling Seniors: Utilizing *Meals on Wheels* Volunteers

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**Abstract**

Low-income older adults who reside in the community have fewer opportunities to access services and limited resources to obtain equipment that would enhance safety in their living environment. Through their “army” of volunteers, Meals on Wheels agencies have long been the eyes of the community to identify older adults who are socially isolated and disabled (Thomas et al., 2018). The purpose of this project was to evaluate the (1) delivery of the *Midlands Modifiers Home Safety Program* and (2) training program for the Meals on Wheels volunteers who will administer the home safety screen. *The Midlands Modifiers Home Safety Program* recruited 15 Meals on Wheel volunteers, was offered to 50 meal recipient participants who met eligibility criteria, and volunteers screened 34 homes with follow-up by an occupational therapist. Project outcomes demonstrated program feasibility and program appropriateness by volunteer participants and ratings of program appropriateness by meal recipients. Meal recipients did not indicate program feasibility due to awareness of the limited access of services or repairs for renters. Other outcomes found that every home screened had a minimum of one safety concern and a mean score of 3 safety concerns for the total number of homes with screens completed. This study was the first known study to train Meals on Wheels volunteers to complete home safety screens and demonstrated the importance of a supportive community organization and an occupational therapist to design feasible programs that fill the need of community stakeholders.

**Synopsis:**

An occupational therapist and a community program that serves seniors collaborated to create a program that provides home safety recommendations. The occupational therapist trained the Meals on Wheels volunteers to complete home safety screens and provided individual recommendations to each meal recipient screened. The program design was studied to see if it was appropriate and feasible.

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**Keywords:** *Community-dwelling older adults, home safety, Meals on Wheels, volunteers*

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